

Recommendations for the Effective Use of Students' Extended Responses

New England Common Assessment Program

Writing Assessment Grades 5, 8 & 11

With the release of the 2010 NECAP assessment results, all Vermont students' Extended Writing Responses were returned to their schools in a CD format. We believe that this information provides a tremendous opportunity for our teachers, students, and families to promote effective writing instruction, as well as increased student engagement in their own learning.

NOTE: Students' writing is identified by name and ID number and should be treated as a confidential student record, subject to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Only people with a *legitimate educational interest* in an individual student's work are allowed to know the identity of the student (e.g., parent, special educator, current and future teachers).

We encourage educators to use the recommendations below to assist in utilizing the actual writing responses effectively with different stakeholder audiences:

- **With colleagues at the same and different grade levels for collaborative teaming to:**
 - ⇒ Focus on using the responses formatively to make instructional and curricular changes based on what is “teachable” (e.g., focus, elaboration, transitions, conclusions, ...).
 - ⇒ Examine the collective works of students who scored in each of the proficiency levels to determine if there are common problems or issues that might be addressed through group instruction.
 - ⇒ Use the released writing and rubrics as benchmarked writing expectations for adjacent grade levels and other content areas (e.g., how can the 4th or 7th grade students benefit from examining the student work?).
 - ⇒ Compare how students perform on writing in response to different writing prompts/genres.
 - ⇒ Support all teachers (K-12) in taking ownership for teaching and assessing writing, particularly in courses such as science, social studies and mathematics where writing is essential to success in the class but typically is not explicitly taught.
- **With colleagues and administrators to:**
 - ⇒ Create opportunities to form collaborative teams to examine student work to determine instructional and curricular needs.
 - ⇒ Look at writing across the grade levels in a system to evaluate the effectiveness of writing opportunities and instruction.
 - ⇒ Use the student writing to inform educators about the importance of frequent writing in all content areas as a vehicle to build fluency and to assess classroom learning.
- **With students to:**
 - ⇒ Examine their own writing response, using the rubric to guide reflection on strengths and challenges.
 - ⇒ Give students the opportunity to respond to each other's writing and/or revise their on-demand draft.

- **With parents to:**
 - ⇒ Share during parent conferences to show their child's strengths and areas of need in writing.
 - ⇒ Promote parent awareness of writing expectations and provide strategies that they can use to build their child's writing skills.
 - ⇒ Help them understand the continuum of learning expectations evident in the benchmarks.